



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility



A message from the Executive Director

Instead of trying to control behavior through rewards and punishments, we help students internalize values and ways of thinking that lead to responsible behavior.

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

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We need to rethink ‘discipline’

More and more schools and school districts are recognizing that we need to change the whole way we think about “discipline.”

Our ideas about “discipline” are based on our assumptions about human nature and human behavior. Behaviorist approaches aim to control behavior through rewards and punishments. The assumption seems to be that, if left to their own devices, students naturally tend to do the wrong thing. They need controls imposed from outside to do right. By receiving rewards when they behave well and punishments when they behave poorly, they eventually get into the habit of “being good.”

Approaches aligned with social and emotional learning (SEL) are based on different assumptions: that all human beings share certain basic needs and that human behavior is an attempt to meet one or more of those needs. These needs include survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Everything we do represents the best action we could think of at that moment to address a basic need.

Ever since humans appeared on the planet, we have been remarkably creative and successful at meeting our basic needs. But of course we all sometimes make decisions that don’t work out well. We may do things that fail to get us what we really need. We may do harm to others. Such ineffective or destructive actions may result from past hurts that prevent clear thinking, a constricted sense of options resulting from poor role models, misinformation or lack of information, underdeveloped social and emotional skills, or a combination of these.

This is where “discipline” comes in. Although the word “discipline” has become associated with punishment, it comes originally from the Latin word “disciplina,” which means instruction, knowledge. “Discipulus” is the Latin word for pupil or disciple. Practitioners of SEL see discipline in this way, as an educational process aimed at helping students become successful, responsible people, growing in their capacity to fulfill their needs while fulfilling their responsibilities to others.

Of course, adequate supervision, effective procedures, clear expectations for behavior, rules, and consequences are all necessary for an effective school discipline policy. But approaches to discipline aligned with SEL go beyond this to engage students in a process of internalizing values and ways of thinking that lead to responsible behavior.

SKILLS & SELF-REFLECTION

Doing this involves providing instruction to develop students’ SEL skills in such areas as listening, anger management, assertiveness, and problem-solving. With improved social and emotional skills, students are better able to meet their needs, and they have more options when conflicts arise or events trigger their feelings.

Equally important is encouraging self-reflection. Through reflecting on their lives and their behavior, students come to know themselves better. What do they really want in life? Which of the basic human needs are central for them at this time? Survival? Belonging? Power? Freedom? Fun? How are they striving to meet their needs?

continued on page 9



Restore360 evolves – and spreads across NYC

In January 2014, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice issued an unusual call to action: They instructed schools around the country to stop using exclusionary disciplinary policies that send young people – disproportionately students of color – into the “school to prison pipeline.”

“The widespread overuse of suspensions and expulsions has tremendous costs,” said Education Secretary Arne Duncan. “Suspended students are less likely to graduate on time and more likely to be suspended again, repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the juvenile justice system.” What’s more, said Attorney General Eric Holder, “the impacts of exclusionary policies are not felt equally in every segment of the population – with students of color and those with disabilities often receiving different and more severe punishments than their peers.” A joint statement by the two departments noted that “racial disparities in American school discipline are significant and persistent,” and that “those racial disparities cannot be explained by

differential misbehavior by students of color.”

Holder and Duncan issued guidelines for creating new discipline policies that encourage positive student behavior by fostering social and emotional learning (SEL) and by using “restorative approaches” to discipline that keep students in school.

At the time of the announcement, this shift was already well underway in the New York City public schools. Since 2011, Morningside Center had been working with the NYC Department of Education’s Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) to introduce “restorative circles” to middle and high schools throughout the city. OSYD tapped us to be its lead partner in this effort because of our 30-year collaboration with the DOE to foster social and emotional learning in the schools, and because our staff had received intensive training in restorative practices. Soon we began providing training (25 hours per person) and on-site coaching for faculty from schools across the

continued on page 8



The 4Rs for Middle School changes teachers & students

“I have learned many things in my 4Rs class,” said one NYC middle school student, “but one major thing I learned was no matter how different people are, you shouldn’t judge them and you should always respect them. Also, I learned that you shouldn’t join anyone and help them bully the person. You should try to stop it.”



Not all of the thousands of young people who took part in our 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution) this past year are as eloquent about the program’s impact. But a 2013 survey of middle

school 4Rs students and teachers by the independent evaluator Metis Associates did find that the great majority liked The 4Rs and learned from it. Their teachers reported that the program had helped their students fight less, care more, and create a more harmonious classroom and school (see the chart below for a few of the report’s findings).

The 4Rs, Morningside Center’s classroom-based program for grades preK to 8, stands out among social

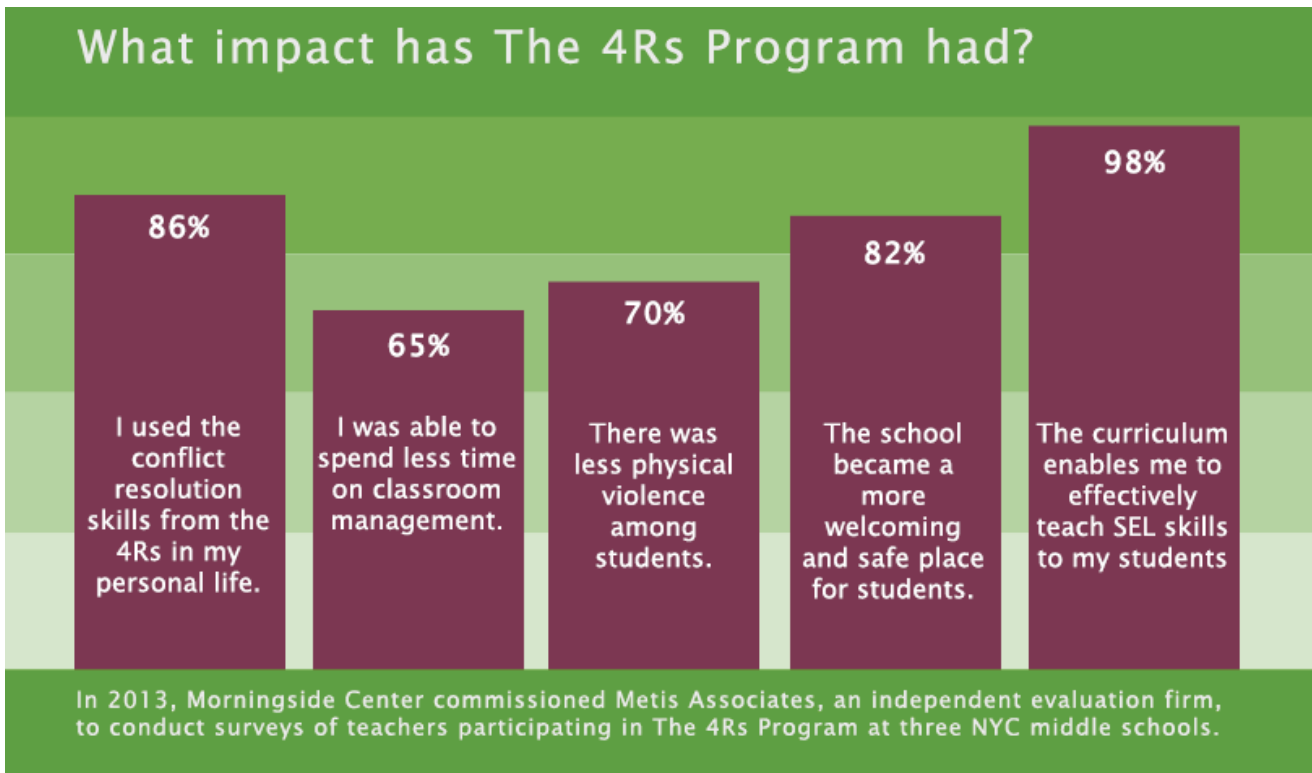
and emotional learning programs because it is built on **children’s books** (like the ones on this page) and is integrated into the language arts.

We help teachers teach The 4Rs well by providing engaging workshops and hands-on classroom coaching. The 4Rs curriculum includes weekly, grade-specific lessons. Ideally, teachers across a grade (or the whole school) teach lessons at the same time so they can support each other in doing this exciting but challenging work with young people.



The 4Rs for Middle School has 10 themes: envisioning a community based on respect; feelings; listening; put-downs & teasing; bullying; sexual harassment; cultural diversity, prejudice & discrimination; standing up to teasing, bullying, harassment & discrimination; solving problems; and making a difference.

Each unit includes a read-aloud of a carefully selected book. Students discuss, write about and do roleplays based on the book. Then they do skills practice related to the theme.



The 4Rs coaching model wins federal research grant

We are thrilled to report that in September 2014, our collaboration with researchers on a project called The 4Rs+MTP received a **Goal 3 grant from the U.S. Department of Education**. Through the project, we are implementing The 4Rs in conjunction with a powerful teacher coaching model called My Teaching Partner.

The grant will enable us to provide all 3rd and 4th grade teachers at 33 NYC public schools with training and coaching in The 4Rs, using My Teaching Partner. Another 33 schools will form the control group in this 3-year randomized control study. Researchers from the University of Virginia (UVA) and Fordham University will analyze the impact of the program on teachers and students. Kristin Page Stuart, a long-time Morningside Center staff developer, is leading the project for Morningside Center.

My Teaching Partner, developed by researchers at UVA, builds on the growing understanding that teacher-student interactions are the main drivers of student learning. UVA researchers identified specific types of interactions (“dimensions” of teaching) that are key. When teachers are skillful in these areas, students do better.

Through MTP, teachers choose a dimension of their teaching to focus on (together with their Morningside Center coach). Then the teacher videotapes herself teaching over time. The coach reviews the videos and works closely with the teacher

to pinpoint the teacher’s challenges and ways to address them.

For more about this transformative program, see Suzanne Bouffard’s excellent *New York Times* article published in April 2014. An excerpt is below.

4Rs middle schools students:
What did you learn?

I learned about stress. It helped a lot for taking tests.	It's important to listen closely to others
Listening. I remembered when my friend was feeling down about her family and I stood there just to listen to what she had to say.	No matter how different people are, you shouldn't judge them and you should always respect them.
	When I get angry, I breathe in and out and count to 10.
	The power of a smile

In 2013, Metis Associates surveyed 4Rs students at three NYC middle schools.

Teach the teachers well (excerpted from *New York Times*, April 30, 2014)

In her article about The 4Rs+My Teaching Partner, Suzanne Bouffard details how this intensive coaching process gave 3rd grade NYC teacher Yvonne Ford the support she needed to make breakthroughs in her teaching.

After Ford told [Morningside Center staff developer Kristin] Page Stuart that she wanted to work on her loud tone of voice and sometimes tense body language, Ford recalls that “we would look at the clips and Kristin would say, ‘I want you to look and tell me what you see.’” The sessions were eye-opening. “Colleagues had told me, but seeing it shed another light – and I didn’t like what I saw.”

Page Stuart suggested some strategies, like leaning in to speak privately to students, gently tapping the shoulder of a student who was off-task rather than reprimanding her, and giving students more time to respond to questions.

Now, Ford says, “I have more patience. I try to think from their perspective and give them voice.”

She is seeing those changes pay off, she reports, recalling a student who was constantly picked on and sat outside the circle during class discussions. During one 4Rs lesson about respecting people who are different, the student started to cry. Ford reports, “I leaned in and asked if everything was okay. She said she had something she wanted to say,” and proceeded to tell the class that the teasing was deeply bothering her. “Right then and there things started to change,” Ford remembers. “Everyone apologized. The other students started inviting her to play and sitting with her in the cafeteria.” Before the coaching, Ford says she wouldn’t have known how to make the student feel safe enough to speak up. ■

After-School + SEL = PAZ and CREW

PAZ!

Since Morningside Center opened our first after-school program in 1999 at PS 24 in Sunset Park Brooklyn, we have been putting social & emotional learning (SEL) at the heart of after-school. Our program at PS 24, called PAZ (for Peace from A to Z), still thrives, along with two newer PAZ programs, one for elementary students and another for middle school students at PS 214 in the Bronx.

Together these exemplary programs serve some 620 young people from 3pm to 6pm every school day and all day on holidays and over the summer. Students take part in a rich array of activities including the arts, sports, STEM, community projects, academic support . . . and a healthy dose of SEL. In fact, program directors Adam Torres and Mio Perez and PAZ manager Yari Hernandez ensure that SEL is threaded throughout these programs

so that young people build their SEL skills, and get a consistent message of caring and respect, through PAZ:

- In **sports**, kids make up cooperative forms of games. (The more times we pass that basketball, the better!)
- In **arts**, kids write and perform plays about conflicts and how they can be resolved. They draw about things that have happened in their lives and how they feel about them.
- **Peacemaking** is everywhere. Teams of trained peer mediators (grades 3-5) and peace helpers (grades K-2) resolve many of the conflicts and problems that come up during after-school.
- **SEL Class.** Every week, trained teachers use playful activities to build students' SEL skills - from active listening to standing up to bias.

Below: A beautiful thank you card we got from 4th-graders at PAZ@214. **Right:** Two PAZ girls interview each other.



Kids of PAZ 4B!



CREW!

What should kids do in after-school? Have fun, exercise, explore new interests, get some academic support . . . and build their social and emotional skills. Increasingly, researchers and practitioners have come to see that after-school is a great moment for helping young people develop these critical life skills. New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development has recognized this and has mandated SEL as a core element in the city's expanding after-school system.

But there's nothing particularly easy about integrating SEL into an after-school program. In 2014, with support from the Pinkerton Foundation, Morningside Center developed a new program called **CREW: Friends for the Journey** to support staff from NYC middle-school after-school programs in fostering SEL. We are creating a new curriculum that sequentially develops students' SEL skills, but in an engaging way that works in after-school. Through activities, roleplays and discussion, young people explore everything from anger and stress to dreams and

goals, as well as cultural diversity, gender identity and stereotypes. They think about skills they'll need to do well in school.

Beginning in the summer of 2014 we provided training in SEL and the CREW curriculum for 66 staff from eight after-school programs, from Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens. Our staff developers then followed up with onsite coaching for staff. At each program, all kids are taking part in CREW at least twice a week.

"The after-school program directors are excited about this. They really feel a need for it," says Morningside Center Program Associate Doris Lo, who is helping coordinate the project. Staff developer Ava Daniel, who is coaching after-school staff, says the curriculum invites connections that wouldn't otherwise happen. For instance, young program staff members have shared their own experiences of middle school in ways that resonated with the kids.

"The kids are very engaged," says Ava. "This curriculum helps them learn about themselves!" ■



Restore 360, continued from page 3

city (100 schools so far).

This program, now called Restore360, has evolved and grown along the way. Initially the program had one main component: helping educators facilitate restorative circles – regular community-building gatherings in which students share thoughts and feelings in a relatively nonhierarchical setting. Through weekly or daily circles, students gain a sense of connection and trust, meeting the crucial developmental needs of adolescents for belonging and voice.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

We quickly saw the amazing potential of circles to engage young people in the school community and improve their ability to relate well to others. We also saw several ways to further develop the approach. First, it was clear that students needed to boost their SEL skills and other essential life skills to get the most out of circles. And many teachers needed more structure and content for the circles. So we developed a **circles curriculum** that balances open-ended sharing activities (the traditional circle approach) with activities that



The sharing in restorative circles was so powerful that it really set a tone for the entire school year: that this place is a place to be safe, and to be supported, and to be vulnerable.

– High school teacher Beth Mowry

Restore360 Components

- **Regular classroom circles**
(to build community & SEL skills)
- **Restorative interventions**
(to repair harm)
- **Professional learning** for school staff
- **Rethinking Discipline**
(to help school leaders align their approach to discipline with SEL and restorative approaches)

explicitly build students’ SEL skills in a systematic way. We also looked for ways to make our **coaching of teachers** as effective as possible, so we created a manual to guide our staff developers in this critical process. We also began working with Dr. Anne Gregory of Rutgers to create a coaching model based on RP-Observe, a tool she developed for assessing the quality of circle facilitation.

We saw that schools and educators needed preparation to undertake the challenging work of using restorative practices to address harms that have been done. We began training and coaching school staff in facilitating **restorative interventions**, which bring together the parties involved in an incident with other members of the community to explore the impact of the incident and agree on steps for healing.

Of course, actually using such a restorative process as an alternative to traditional punitive methods of school discipline requires planning and effort by school leaders and the whole school community. So we began developing an additional component of Restore360 to support schools in **rethinking discipline**. We didn’t have to start from scratch, since we had already been working for several years to help school leaders and their teams align their discipline policies with SEL.

We are excited to be part of the movement to create safe, respectful schools where young people deepen their sense of responsibility for themselves and their connection to others and school. ■



Rethink Discipline, continued from page 2

Are the decisions they're making leading them to success or frustration? How is their behavior affecting other people they care about—their family, their friends, their teachers? What might they do differently next time so that things will turn out better—for themselves and others?

Teachers sometimes complain that “I’ve taught the lessons, but the kids don’t apply what they’re learning in real-life situations.” This is where self-reflection comes in. The school day represents a huge chunk of “real life” for a child. Working in close proximity with others and facing constant social and academic challenges, students have many opportunities to apply the social and emotional skills they are learning in their SEL lessons. But they need help in doing so. The adults need to help them reflect on the connections between yesterday’s SEL lesson and the behavior that hurt someone’s feelings or got them into trouble. Did the student lash out without thinking? What about those techniques we practiced for cooling down when we’re angry? Did he fail to listen and jump to conclusions? Why did we spend all that time practicing active listening? Did he forget how to be strong and not mean in standing up for himself? Remember those role plays we did?

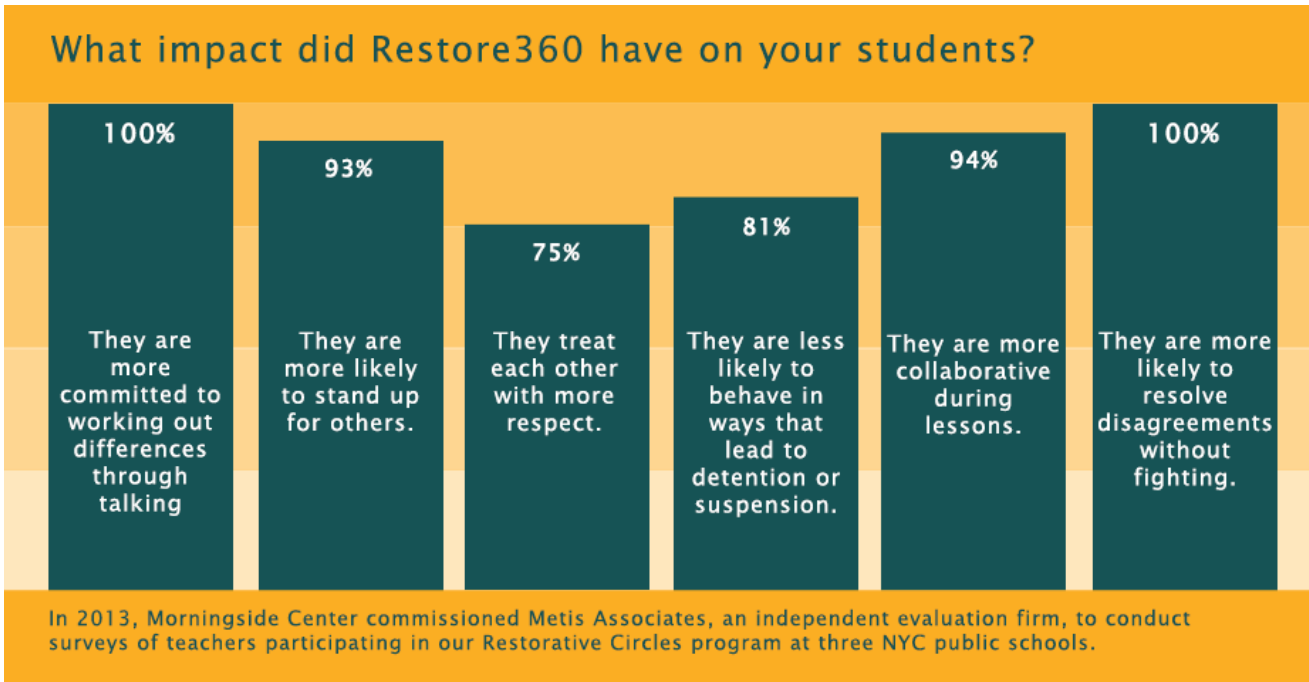
If the adults compartmentalize, putting SEL lessons in one box and “discipline” in another box, it’s not surprising that the kids don’t make the connections between the lessons and their behavior. To help students develop into successful students and adults, we need to support them in seeing the connections between classroom exercises and real life. When we do this, the whole school day becomes a laboratory for students to develop their social and emotional skills. This is discipline at its best.

Through regular SEL lessons and through processes including community-building circles and restorative interventions when harm has been done, schools can give students a chance to share their best selves with others – and make their mistakes an opportunity for learning and change.

– Tom Roderick



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Brian Palmer



REACH 2013-14 school year

Number of **students** who received regular SEL instruction through our programs: **15,352**

Number of **schools** with sustained programs: **72**

Total schools reached, including with workshops: **580**

Number of school **staff** trained/coached: **1,819**

Number of peer **mediators** (grades 3-12) and **peace helpers** (PreK-2) trained and coached: **772**

Attendees at our 2014 **Courageous Schools** conference: **254 people** from **67 schools**



ONLINE 2014

Number of new classroom activities on the TeachableMoment section of our website: **53**

Most popular lesson topic: **Nelson Mandela** (See frequent TM themes at left.)

School districts that made our materials on Ferguson the focus of their teaching recommendations on the subject: **Washington DC & Madison WI**

Increase in the number of people subscribing to our newsletter: **36%**

Christopher Smith



MEDIA 2013-14 school year

Feature on our 4Rs Program and the growth of social & emotional learning in schools: **Education Week**

Report on the cutting edge coaching process we are developing for The 4Rs: **New York Times**

Segment on our PAZ After-School Program at PS 214 in the Bronx: **Telemundo**

Left: Our 2014 Courageous Schools Conference focused on restorative practices. It featured inspiring talks by educator/author Shaka Senghor and Kay Pranis, a national leader in restorative practices. PS 321 principal Liz Phillips accepted our Courageous Educator Award.



**Hello from
Morningside Center staff!**



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